

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. It is also, in my opinion, a violation of the Constitutional right to free speech which encompasses choice--to not be compelled to say or not say something--as to what can be said.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. We also get situations such as this--a media giant forcing its smaller entities to air material it chooses. Material which is biased and does not present both sides of an issue is the worst form of media control--it is in effect, censorship. We may as well live in a dictatorship or a communist country when fundamental freedoms of owners, stockholders and especially the public can be circumvented only because a corporation believes itself above the laws of this country as well as fundamental fairness.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. They also show one of the things that was most feared when the rules were lifted or weakened. And now we have a broadcasting giant forcing its affiliates to air an openly biased "documentary" during the period before a presidential election. Is this what you intended when you relaxed the rules? If this is your intention, then I ask for members of the FCC to resign because you failed to do your duty to the American people. If this is not what you intended, then I urge you to reign in Sinclair and reinstate the rules that prevent such media control. It is not too late to do the right thing. I would feel this way if an anti-Bush documentary, or a film such as Fahrenheit 9/11, were forced upon the public. Without balance, it becomes propaganda. Without balance, it is less than the freedom we must expect from America. Thank you.